

**What Is Claimed Is:**

1. A method for diagnosing cardiovascular disease, comprising providing contact between a sample of body fluid and phosphocholine and/or derivative thereof, assessing the presence and/or concentration of antibodies to phosphocholine and/or to said derivative in the sample of body fluid, and evaluating said presence and/or concentration of antibodies to phosphocholine and/or to said derivative in the sample of body fluid as an indicator of cardiovascular disease.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said diagnosis of a cardiovascular disease comprises a diagnosis of early atherosclerosis, hypertension or thrombosis.

3. The method of claim 2 comprising measuring said antibodies to phosphocholine and/or to said derivative by immunoassay.

4. The method of claim 2 comprising measuring said antibodies to phosphocholine and/or to said derivative by an enzyme linked immunosorbent assay.

5. The method of claim 2 comprising measuring said antibodies to phosphocholine and/or to said derivative by radioimmunoassay.

6. The method of claim 2 comprising measuring the concentration of said antibodies to phosphocholine and/or to said derivative in serum prepared from a blood sample.

7. The method of claim 2 comprising measuring the concentration of said antibodies to phosphocholine and/or to said derivative in plasma prepared from a blood sample.

8. The method of claim 1 comprising measuring said antibodies to phosphocholine and/or to said derivative by immunoassay.

9. the method of claim 1 comprising measuring said antibodies to phosphocholine and/or to said derivative by an enzyme linked immunosorbent assay.

10. The method of claim 1 comprising nmeasuring antibodies to phosphocholine and/or to said derivative by radioimmunoassay.

11.. The method of claim 1 comprising measuring the concentration of said antibodies to phosphocholine and/or to said derivative in serum prepared from a blood sample.

12. The method of claim 1 comprising measuring the concentration of said antibodies to phosphocholine and/or to said derivative in plasma prepared from a blood sample.

13. The method of claim 1 wherein said sample of body fluid is a human blood sample or fraction thereof, and said measurement is by immunoassay.

14. The method of claim 1 wherein said derivative is phosphorylcholine.

15. The method of claim 1 wherein said derivative is phosphatidylcholine.

16. The method of claim 1 wherein said derivative is lysophosphatidylcholine.

17. The method of claim 3 wherein said derivative is phosphocholine, phosphorycholine, phosphatidylcholine or lysophosphatidylcholine.

18. The method of claim 4 wherein said derivative is phosphocholine, phosphorycholine, phosphatidylcholine or lysophosphatidylcholine.

19. The method of claim 5 wherein said derivative is phosphocholine, phosphorycholine, phosphatidylcholine or lysophosphatidylcholine.

20. The method of claim 6 wherein said derivative is phosphocholine, phosphorycholine, phosphatidylcholine or lysophosphatidylcholine.